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ABSTRACT

Presented in capsule form for the convenience of busy policy makers, planners, and program managers, this booklet summarizes major findings of a three-year study on practical aspects of rural development, with particular emphasis on ways of alleviating extreme poverty among disadvantaged rural families. Using case studies from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, and Thailand as a basis, the report contains sections on the new international consensus, the genesis of the new consensus, getting to know the rural poor, toward better integration, toward greater community participation, the importance of front-line workers, educating villagers for change, new roles for voluntary organizations, some practical next steps, and an epilogue. Stressing that the first "must" for anyone desiring to help the rural poor is to get to know them before deciding on what specific program approach to adopt to meet their needs, the document further suggests that another important requirement is to focus on the whole family. Noting that the family improvement measures in the study (health, nutrition, family planning, etc.) do not in themselves comprise a total rural development strategy, the report emphasizes that these essentials must be part of a broader strategy that also includes strong measures for accelerating rural economic growth. (BRR)

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NEW STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING RURAL FAMILY LIFE

Philip H. Coombs

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PREFACE

This booklet presents in capsule form, for the convenience of busy "operators", the major findings of a three-year research study on the practical aspects of rural development, with particular emphasis on ways of alleviating extreme poverty among disadvantaged rural families.

The study was conducted by the International Council for Educational Development with the cooperation of numerous organizations and individuals in the developing countries involved. The full findings of the study, including nine comprehensive case studies of innovative rural programs, are contained in MEETING THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE RURAL POOR: The Integrated, Community-Based Approach (Pergamon Press and ICED, 1980).

The aim of the case studies was to extract pertinent lessons--both positive and negative--from the practical experiences of these programs that could provide helpful guidance to policy-makers, planners and program managers in many other developing countries and external assistance agencies. People working on rural development in several industrialized countries have also found the research results useful.

The author and the International Council for Educational Development wish to express their gratitude to the following organizations whose financial assistance made this research possible: the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Charles E. Merrill Trust, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Netherlands

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THE NEW INTERNATIONAL CONSENSUS

The new international consensus on rural development that grew out of the radical changes in development thinking in the 1970s holds bright promise of a better life for millions of rural families living in extreme poverty throughout the developing world. The challenge for the 1980s and 1990s is to convert this bright promise into a reality.

The goals and strategies espoused by this new consensus are bold and unconventional. The cardinal goal is "to meet the basic needs of the rural poor", with special attention to young children, women and minorities who bear a disproportionate share of the burdens of rural poverty. Its further aims are to increase rural employment and the productivity and incomes of small farmers and other rural workers, and to involve all rural people as full participants in the national development process, as both contributors and beneficiaries.

The strategy advocated for pursuing these ambitious goals differs radically from the top-down, fragmented, sector-by-sector approach that has been followed almost universally ever since the short-lived "community development" boomlet in the 1950s. This new strategy calls for an "integrated" approach to rural development, with major emphasis on "community participation".

The desirability, indeed the urgency, of these humanitarian objectives is beyond

dispute. What is very much in question, however, is how to translate these good intentions into solid deeds. The truth is that this new international consensus has confronted policy-makers, planners and program managers in developing countries and external assistance agencies with a bewildering array of agonizing implementation problems to which there are no easy solutions. This is not to suggest that these important goals are impossible to achieve, but simply to emphasize that implementing them is going to be far more difficult and time-consuming than the easy rhetoric of the new consensus might lead one to suppose.

This booklet summarizes the findings of a recently published research study by the International Council for Educational Development (ICED) that was expressly designed to help operators to solve these complex implementation problems. The project was planned in cooperation with many such operators and the case studies it includes were carried out in partnership with local researchers in various developing countries.

Although the study concentrated on rural areas, the basic lessons it revealed are relevant also to meeting the basic needs of the disadvantaged families in urban areas as well. And although the sample programs it examined are all located in Asian countries (namely, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand), the basic problems and principles they demonstrate are widely applicable to developing countries in all regions and to significant portions of many developed countries as well. In addi-

tion to these full-scale Asian case studies, the study also examined--though in less breadth and depth--a variety of other pertinent programs and projects in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. The conclusions are further reinforced by a series of earlier ICED studies on rural development carried out in all the major developing regions of the world (see list on inside front cover).

These earlier ICED studies, sponsored by UNICEF and the World Bank, mainly explored the characteristics and potentialities of non-formal education and focused on types of rural programs of particular interest to the sponsoring agencies--such as "second chance" educational programs for non-schoolgoers and early drop-outs, occupational training for out-of-school youths, up-grading programs for adult craftsmen and small entrepreneurs, and various types of "women's programs".

This new ICED study, by contrast, focuses on the most disadvantaged rural populations, on the family as the basic social unit, and on the community as the family's primary habitat. Because of its concern with "basic needs" and "integration" it cuts across a wide range of different sectors and specialties bearing on family life that are customarily treated separately by development agencies and by researchers--including such diverse fields as education, health, nutrition, maternal and child care, agriculture, family planning, occupational skill training, and special programs for women and youth. It also draws upon a variety of academic disciplines that tend to look at the

world through quite different lenses, including economics, sociology, anthropology, organization and management and political science.

The study is specifically addressed to the following questions most frequently raised by operators in various ministries and other organizations during ICED's exploratory discussions with them:

- "What does integration actually mean and what practical steps can our organization take to achieve it?"

- "What different forms can community participation take; how can it be brought about and organized; and what measures can be taken to insure that the poorest members of rural communities are included?"

- "How can appropriate educational components be developed and incorporated in various programs for improving the quality of rural family life?"

- "How can the unique flexibility of voluntary organizations be more fully utilized to help larger scale government programs to serve more people more effectively at affordable costs?"

- "What are the financial and organizational implications of all the foregoing?"

The nine comprehensive case studies covered by the project (included in the published

report) are briefly described in the attached table. They seek to trace the evolution of each program from its origins, including critical incidents along the way; to evaluate various aspects of its performance; and to identify specific internal and environmental factors that have significantly helped or hampered the achievement of its objectives.

The conclusions presented below are based on a comparative analysis of all the cases, which revealed that many of the same influential factors and problems turned up repeatedly in very different contexts, suggesting that a number of basic principles and common issues apply to most developing countries despite their considerable differences in other respects.

The main criteria used in selecting the cases were that each should (1) have as a primary objective, improving the conditions of poor rural families; (2) be employing an integrated approach encompassing two or more important facets of rural family life; (3) include a substantial element of community participation; and (4) contain significant lessons about education (including training).

Finding a good sample of cases was not easy; numerous possibilities were screened before the nine described here were chosen. The biggest difficulty was the scarcity of pertinent government cases, for although many governments had committed themselves in principle to the goals and strategy of the new international consensus, few had yet created programs to implement them that had

A GUIDE TO THE RECENT ICED CASE STUDIES

Name & Characteristics	Types of Activities
SAVAR: Gonoshasthya kendro (People's Health Centre) Bangladesh (started 1972). Indigenous voluntary rural development organization that evolved from wartime relief work. Service area includes 100 villages with 100,000 population.	Initial focus on HEALTH CARE & FAMILY PLANNING, but has gradually added nutrition, food production, functional education for children and adults, occupational training for youth and women, etc.
LAMPANG HEALTH DEVELOPMENT PROJECT in Thailand (started 1974). Experimental project of National Ministry of Public Health. Covers entire Lampang Province with population of 600,000.	PRIMARY HEALTH CARE, including preventive, promotive and curative services, nutrition, maternal and child care and family planning.
CBFPS: Community-Based Family Planning Service, Thailand (started 1974). Indigenous voluntary	FAMILY PLANNING, community-based motivation and contraceptive distribution; also health promotion.

org. (cooperates closely with Ministry of Public Health). Serves 10 mil. (23% of national pop.) in 113 (out of 600) districts and 12,000 (out of 45,000) villages.	
SWRC: Social Work & Research Centre, based in Tilonia, Rajasthan, India (started 1972). Indigenous voluntary org. Main service area: 80,000 population. Satellite programs in four other areas.	WATER DEVELOPMENT, AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, EDUCATION; also child care, rural industry, craft training & production for women; new experimental programs for settling landless families on newly cleared farm land.
BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (started 1972). Indigenous voluntary rural development organization that evolved from a wartime relief agency. Main project area plus two others have total population of about 250,000.	Main activities in AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, FAMILY PLANNING, ADULT EDUCATION; also occupational training and cooperatives for women; youth activities; construction of community centers and infrastructure; creation of community-based organizations.

SARVODAYA SHRAMADANA MOVEMENT, Sri Lanka (started 1958). Indigenous voluntary organization. Covers 2,000 villages (in varying degrees) throughout Sri Lanka.	Activities vary according to village interests, needs and leadership; most include PRE-SCHOOLS, community kitchens for CHILD NUTRITION, and MOTHERS' GROUPS; other typical activities include YOUTH VOCATIONAL TRAINING in agriculture & fishery; development of rural industry & village infrastructure.
C-BIRD: Community-Based Integrated Rural Development projects in So. Korea. Non-governmental multi-village development organization in 7 "impact" areas, each covering 7 to 21 villages with populations ranging from 2,000 to 9,000.	LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE (Community Centers, roads, bridges, telephones, banks, etc.; AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT; HOUSEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS; also social services (child care centers, limited health services); rural industry.
IPPA Youth Projects: Indonesia (started 1975). Pilot project of Indonesian Planned Parenthood Assn. supported by International Planned Parenthood Federation.	Dissemination of POPULATION EDUCATION AND INFORMATION in rural areas by members of existing voluntary youth organizations.

AI: Agricultural Institute at Kosbad Hill, Maharashtra, India (started 1949). Non-governmental training & research institution serving agricultural development in large areas of Maharashtra State. Case study focuses on AI's special development program involving about 750 tribal families around Kosbad.	AGRICULTURAL research, training, and technical assistance to improve PRODUCTIVITY & HOUSEHOLD conditions of Warli tribal families. Also provides PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION & FARMER TRAINING schools for tribal children and youth.
GBSK: Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra at Kosbad Hill, Maharashtra, India (started 1957). Non-governmental institution for preschool and elementary education. Case study focus is on GBSK's activities directed at children and mothers of 750 tribal families close to Kosbad village.	EDUCATION and SOCIAL SERVICES for preschool and elementary age tribal children; works with mothers; also trains preschool teachers for rural areas elsewhere in India.

sufficient experience to warrant evaluation. Consequently, the ICED sample is rather short on government programs and long on programs run by private voluntary organizations (which because of their generally smaller size and greater flexibility find it relatively easier to initiate integrated, community-based programs). Fortunately, however, most of these selected non-governmental programs, contrary to tradition, have close cooperative relations with various government agencies, which in itself offers some important lessons for the future.

It should be noted that these dynamic programs are constantly undergoing change; hence they may look rather different today than when the case studies were made in the late 1970s. ICED has since been informed, for example, that a number of them have further diversified their activities and broadened their clienteles, and most have taken steps to remedy certain deficiencies brought out in the case studies.

THE GENESIS OF THE NEW CONSENSUS

To appreciate the nature of the implementation problems discussed below it will be helpful to look briefly at why the new consensus came about.

By the early 1970s there was rapidly growing skepticism and disenchantment among development experts and authorities with the conventional theories that had dominated national and international development strategies and

programs for over 20 years. The new facts available by then made it clear that the impressive economic growth achieved by many developing countries had been accompanied by a very lopsided and inequitable pattern of development. These disturbing revelations--including the jolting discovery that 600 to 800 million people (about 40 percent of the total population of the developing world) were living in "absolute" poverty--called into serious question several implicit basic assumptions that often underlay the old GNP/economic growth concept of development, in particular the following:

- That by concentrating development efforts on the modernization and industrialization of major urban centers, shockwaves would soon radiate out across the countryside, triggering a dynamic and self-sustaining process of rural development, thus minimizing the need for direct government intervention and investment in rural areas.

- That agricultural development (measured by increased output of export and other commercial crops) was the essence of rural development and should be given top priority in any rural investments.

- That economic development and social development were distinct and separate processes, and that sizeable progress on the former must precede any significant progress on the latter.

- That villages and villagers were all more or less alike, hence solutions appro-

priate for one would be appropriate for all.

- That the most efficient and effective way to organize and deliver rural services was by separate specialties, each having its own independent "delivery system" running downward to the rural areas from each specialized ministry and its sub-divisions in the capital city.

The expanding body of evidence in the early 1970s demonstrated beyond any doubt that these earlier assumptions, though perhaps valid in some degree, were seriously flawed. Urban-rural disparities, by any measure, had increased ominously, reflecting a fundamental imbalance in overall national development. It was clear that without strong and expanding rural markets, further growth of urban industry would be seriously hobbled. It was also clear that the lack of opportunity and general unattractiveness of life in rural areas was a major cause of excessive migration and of rapidly growing poverty in overcrowded urban areas. Moreover, the economic and social disparities between the strong and the weak within rural areas were also widening. The number of landless and near-landless families and of under-employed rural workers living in absolute poverty was increasing rapidly, with no let-up in sight.

There could also be no doubt that the earlier neglect of rural "social services"--including education, health, nutrition, family planning, maternal and child care, and programs to improve the status and produc-

tivity of rural women--had become a major handicap to economic development itself, not only in rural areas but, by extension, in urban areas as well. In short, social and economic development were mutually dependent and must proceed hand-in-hand.

Along with the earlier conventional assumptions about development mentioned above, the conventional piecemeal approach to delivering "specialized" rural services, one by one from the top down, had also proved to be seriously flawed, on several scores:

- This fragmented approach resulted in costly bureaucratic competition and duplication of effort, and in major absorption of limited resources by heavy administrative superstructures, leaving far too little for use at the village level where it really counted.

- It resulted--from the vantage point of the rural families on the receiving end--in a bewildering assortment of disconnected, ill-fitting and often contradictory "messages" and advice on how to run their lives.

- It resulted in the benefits of various government programs accruing largely to the stronger and better off members of rural communities, by-passing the weaker and most needy members.

- The inflexibility and excessive standardization of these highly centralized services--including the uniformity of

the "messages" and advice they delivered--ignored important differences in conditions and priorities between different local areas, and between the needs of different subgroups within the same community.

- The authoritarian stance and "father-knows-best" tone of voice of these top-down delivery systems tended to foster a sense of dependency rather than self-reliance on the part of villagers.

- The costs per family served were so high under this single-purpose approach that the central government in any low income country would find it economically impossible in the foreseeable future to accommodate a sizeable majority of all rural families.

This is not to say that government rural services have had no useful impacts. Agricultural extension, credit and input services, for example, have sometimes been of substantial help to larger and more progressive commercial farmers, but they have generally been of far less help to small subsistence farmers, many of whom have lost their land in the process. Again, rural health services have brought benefits to many families--particularly the campaigns to stamp out major diseases such as cholera, smallpox and malaria; but they have typically been very weak and incomplete services, often accessible to less than 20 percent of the rural population, and least of all to the poorest members. In most developing coun-

tries family planning services until recently have been largely clinic-based and urban-bound, and even where they have sought to reach out to rural areas their strident, single-purpose message has often met a deaf ear from the poorest families, whose private logic on how many children to have conflicted sharply with the logic of national population policy. Conventional "women's programs" in home economics have sometimes proved attractive and useful to the elite women of the community, but irrelevant for the poor ones whose first need is to earn some income. Nutrition programs have often fallen between the stools of health and agricultural services, with nutritionists telling mothers what they should feed their children but not how to grow it, and with agricultural advisers pressing for market-oriented crops that sometimes had severe nutritional side-effects on the family.

As a result of this critical reexamination of earlier assumptions and approaches, and the shock effect of the gross poverty and inequalities that had been unmasked, by the mid-1970s the GNP had been dethroned as the cardinal definition and measuring-rod of national development in favor of a much broader, more humanistic and more egalitarian view that defined development in terms of meeting the "basic needs" and "improving the quality of life" of the people themselves, especially the most disadvantaged. The discredited "trickle-down" approach to rural development and the artificial dichotomy between economic and social development were replaced by a much broader view that equated rural development not simply with increased commercial

agricultural output but with the fundamental economic, social and political transformation of rural societies. Recognition of the severe shortcomings of conventional rural "delivery systems" led to the demand for a more "integrated" and more "community-based" approach to rural development, aimed at uprooting the basic causes of rural poverty and low productivity.

By the end of the 1970s this new consensus on rural development had found expression in a host of new policy statements and initiatives by various multilateral and bilateral development agencies and voluntary organizations, and by a growing number of developing country governments. The World Bank, for example, had moved strongly into the areas of population and health and initiated new-type "integrated rural development projects" that sought to combine the previously fragmented elements of agricultural production systems; the World Health Organization in concert with the United Nations Children's Fund was vigorously advocating a new type of rural "primary health care system", based on community health workers and combining such previously scattered elements as nutrition, clean water, maternal and child care, family planning, sanitation, and curative services; the International Planned Parenthood Federation and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities abandoned their earlier allegiance to the "single-purpose", clinic-based and medically dominated approach to family planning in favor of an "integrated" approach tied to other basic family services; and UNESCO began promoting "life-long" educa-

tion and a broader concept of adult education that extended well beyond literacy classes, and urged its member states to give greater attention to "nonformal" education. The bilateral aid agencies of most developed countries similarly realigned their policies and strategies to fit the basic principles and goals of the new consensus.

Thus, by the close of the 1970s the new rhetoric of the new consensus had become common coinage throughout the world. For the most part, however, the new policy commitments were still at the rhetorical stage as the 1970s ended. Here and there concrete actions had been put underway, but by and large the old order still dominated the action. Hence the hard task of implementing the new consensus was carried over into the 1980s, and it was clear by then that to set the new policies in full motion would require major changes of many sorts--not least of all in organizational structures, styles and attitudes. It would also require a great deal of discovery, trial and error and new learning on the part of program designers and operators--not to mention a good deal of unlearning.

The basic aim of ICED's research project was to assist this process, even if only modestly. Let us turn now to some of its main findings and conclusions.

GETTING TO KNOW THE RURAL POOR

The first "must" for anyone desiring to help the rural poor is to get to know them--to appreciate not only their physical circumstances and needs but their social and political environment, their cultural beliefs, traditions and values, their psychological outlook, their life style and the daily demands upon their time and energies. This may seem self-evident, yet many well-intentioned schemes have foundered for lack of sufficient understanding of the people they were intended to benefit.

Bloodless statistics flowing into an urban-based planning office cannot produce such understanding, nor can tidy sociological and political theories born in academe. There is no substitute for meeting the rural poor face-to-face where they live, observing their conditions and behavior, and listening carefully and patiently to what they have to say--before deciding on what specific program approach to adopt to meet their needs.

Another important requirement is to focus on the family--the whole family. Western-educated planners, reared in individualistic societies, are prone to think in terms of helping "the individual"--the young child, the out-of-school youth, the woman, the small farmer. But ICED's case studies emphasize that the poverty syndrome is not an individual affair; it permeates entire families and whole groups of similarly situated families, and for this reason is perpetuated from one generation to the next. Thus, rural poverty must be attacked by a combination of measures

aimed at all members of the family, not simply the head of the household or the children or the women, for what affects one member inevitably affects all.

Bare statistics conceal the inner feelings and true condition of these unfortunate people: the sense of fatalism and hopelessness that often dominates their lives, that shapes their image of themselves and of the world around them; the gnawing hunger and chronic ill-health that constantly saps their energy to work and inhibits their capacity to learn; their high vulnerability, particularly the young children and mothers, to natural and manmade disasters; the economic inability of small farm families to take even modest risks (such as trying out a promising new high-yielding variety of rice or wheat) lest the vagaries of nature or the market or their own miscalculation should wipe out their livelihood and even their children; their perpetual dependency on the larger neighboring farmer, storekeeper, and moneylender; and not least of all their deep-rooted fear of "getting out of line" that so often keeps these poverty stricken people from reaching out to help themselves, even when opportunities are available.

Generally speaking, these destitute families--sometimes comprising over half the local population or even an entire village--get few benefits from whatever rural services the government may provide, not necessarily by design but by the natural play of forces in such situations. Small subsistence farm families, for example, usually get little or no help from the agricultural extension and

credit services or from cooperatives because they do not "qualify" and because the technical "messages" are tailored to more affluent and better educated commercial farmers. The women are generally left out even though they do a sizeable portion of the farming--especially producing the family's own food--because these extension services are usually run by men and cater only to men. The thinly spread rural health services never even reach a good many villages, and the poorest members lack the means to transport themselves to the nearest clinic, often miles away. Without the indigenous medicine man, healer and midwife, many villages would be utterly devoid of health services.

It is largely the children of the poorest families who lie behind those shockingly high statistics of non-schoolgoers and early dropouts that show up in Unesco reports. The cash costs of school fees, uniforms and books, even though they may seem small to middle class urban dwellers, are often prohibitive for the poor rural family. Moreover, once the muscles of their children grow strong enough to help with the family's chores and survival, the opportunity costs of their spending time in a classroom become even more prohibitive.

It is not enough, however, simply to understand the individual family; it is also important, as the case studies show, to get to know the community as a whole, for the environment of the community often breeds and perpetuates poverty among its members. One must therefore get familiar with its socio-economic and political features, its culture

and traditions, its leadership and power structure, its economic potential, how its resources are distributed, and the nature of its local institutions and decision-making processes. All these are major determinants of what strategies will work, and not work, in any effort to help the poorest members.

The potentialities for development vary widely from one community to another. The difficulties of reducing poverty are greatest in poorly endowed rural areas that are economically static and where even the relatively well-to-do are prisoners of chronic poverty. In such situations strengthened social services may provide a modicum of temporary relief, but without the creation of a fresh economic dynamic bringing new employment possibilities, additional income and enhanced mobility, there is little chance for substantial improvements in the quality of family life, above all for the marginal families on the outside looking in. Their best hope is to move to a more promising rural area or to the city, but the options here are becoming increasingly limited. In many developing countries the growth of the rural population has already created acute scarcities of arable land, and the already overcrowded cities are less and less able to absorb additional waves of refugees from the countryside.

In more favorably endowed rural areas--with good land, water, climate and markets--the prospects for stimulating a new dynamic are, of course, much better. However, it is one thing to assist the general development of such an area--for example by a World Bank-supported agricultural development project--

but quite another thing to help the poorest families within that area to participate equally in the development process and benefits. Just as the pattern of national economic growth and income distribution in most developing countries has been very lop-sided as between urban and rural areas, so also has rural development itself been very lop-sided as between the strong and the weak within each rural area.

This inequality problem is rooted partly in the poor themselves--in their pervasive sense of impotence and hopelessness already referred to, and in their fear of treading on forbidden social territory lest they offend the "higher classes" and the patron on whom they are dependent. But these attitudes did not come with their genes; they were nurtured and are perpetuated by the kind of social, economic and political environment in which they find themselves.

The rural areas of developing countries, as the case studies bring out vividly, are typically characterized by highly uneven access to productive resources such as land, water and capital; by traditional social stratification and division based on caste, lineage, religion, and sex; and by political and economic institutions and practices that reinforce the existing structure of privileges, exploitation and inequalities. Those who are well placed in the hierarchy, who are better educated and endowed (and who themselves are often quite poor by urban middle class standards), generally get the lion's share of whatever new opportunities, inputs and services become available in the area,

leaving only scraps for the poorest segment. Those in power are naturally fearful of any intrusion or innovation that might upset the status quo at their expense.

Any outside agency that ventures blindly and innocently into such a milieu, bent on helping the poorest of the poor toward a more decent and dignified life, can soon find itself frustrated and even in serious trouble. The case studies are replete with examples of this sort.

The unavoidable conclusion is that reaching the poorest families in rural areas and drawing them into the mainstream of development is undoubtedly the single most difficult task of rural development. This is not to say that it cannot be done or that much greater efforts should not be made in this direction. It is simply to emphasize that success requires more than noble rhetoric, laudable intentions and a warm heart. It also requires a realistic appreciation of the socio-economic and political structure, institutions, attitudes, and pattern of human relationships of each village, a knowledge of the real and potential leaders, a wise sense of tactics, and above all an abundance of patience, persistence and courage. Neat technocratic "models" designed in central ministries or in distant external assistance agencies cannot possibly take these critical factors into account. They can only be seen and dealt with at close range.

This brings us to a close range view of how to get started toward better program integration, increased community participation,

and effective educational provisions--all of which, as will be seen, have far-reaching organizational implications.

TOWARD BETTER INTEGRATION

The case studies help de-mystify this ambiguous term by providing concrete examples of five varieties of integration, namely: (1) integrated national planning for rural development; (2) integration of the essential components of a particular program; (3) integration of related activities conventionally dealt with in separate programs; (4) horizontal and vertical integration; and (5) integration of efforts between separate organizations.

Broadly defined, integration in all these examples means essentially: combining naturally related parts into a more cohesive and unified whole in order to enhance their collective cost-effectiveness. The best way to seek out opportunities for fruitful integration is to visualize and analyze any project or program as a productive "system" or "sub-system" designed to accomplish certain specific objectives in a particular setting. Any such system must have an appropriate process made up of a suitable combination of inter-acting, mutually supporting components. To fuel this process the system requires sufficient resource inputs of the right kind and combination. This easily applied type of "systems analysis" (not requiring any mathematical model or difficult quantitative measurement) focuses attention on the critical functional relation-

ships between the components within any particular program, or between two or more closely related programs, and between any program and its intended beneficiaries and their socio-economic milieu. If any of these crucial relationships are malfunctioning, or if any important component is missing, the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the whole system is bound to suffer.

Take, for example, an agricultural extension service--viewed as a major component of an "agricultural knowledge delivery system" whose basic purpose is to help farmers increase their productivity and income. If the work of the research components of this system, which are supposed to generate timely and relevant technical "messages" for delivery to the farmers, are seriously out of tune with the real knowledge needs and concerns of the farmers, then the extension component is bound to misfire (as often happens, unfortunately). Similarly, single-purpose family planning programs frequently misfire because their "I, E, and C" (information, education and communication) components are not meshed with each other or with the supply and service components--leaving the so-called "target audience" confused and unresponsive. In both these examples, better integration among the parts would obviously improve their combined effectiveness.

The above "system" concepts are useful in examining the five varieties of integration listed earlier.

Integrated national planning for rural development.

Integration of programs at the local level can be greatly facilitated by integrated thinking and planning at the national level, especially if it leads to a greater decentralization and devolution of certain specific responsibilities and detailed planning and decisionmaking to lower echelons.

Integrated rural development planning at the national level requires joint planning of national policies and programs, cutting across all relevant "sectors", with a view to weaving them into a cohesive and unified strategy within which all sectors become mutually reinforcing. This is in sharp contrast to the usual practice of planning each sector independently, then giving each its separate budget and its own chapter in the National Plan (whose chapters often have little or no connection with each other). Under such piecemeal planning, for example, the Ministry of Agriculture may be mainly concerned (as is often the case) with maximizing production of selected commercial crops for urban and export markets, in which event the pressing food and nutritional needs of the rural poor, and the problems of small noncommercial farmers, are likely to get short shrift.

Similarly, if everyone expects the family planning organization to manage the "population problem" all by itself, then other important measures conducive to smaller family size--such as improved educational and

employment opportunities for women, and better health care for young children--are likely to be neglected.

Broadscale integrated rural development planning at the national (and international) level can be very helpful in overcoming this piecemeal kind of thinking and programming. Its effectiveness, however, depends on how deeply the top planners, administrators and operating personnel of each specialized agency become genuinely imbued with a broader and more cohesive vision of rural development and convinced that their own special objectives will be better served by a more integrated approach.

Integration of the components of a particular program.

Most of the case studies provide examples of this type of integration but it will suffice to cite two illustrations from the Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) in Rajasthan, India.

SWRC, among other activities, organized a "social education" course for destitute women that gave primary emphasis to literacy but also included craft training. The literacy part failed (for the usual reasons) but the craft training proved popular. Once the women had mastered the craft skills and could produce marketable products, however, it became evident that the training was useless unless the women had access to simple equipment, raw materials, credit and a profitable market. SWRC was ingenious enough to take the necessary steps to "complete the system"

by arranging for these missing components, and the women soon began earning some much needed cash.

Many well-intentioned skill training programs in developing countries over the past 25 years have not had such happy results. They provided only the skills without the essential complementary system components such as access to credit, raw materials and a profitable market, on the naive assumption that the market would automatically absorb and reward them. The lesson here (which applies to a wide range of situations) is that skill training per se is only one piece of an employment and income generating "system"; if the other pieces are missing the training is likely to go to waste.

SWRC also pieced together, quite pragmatically and without any advance plan, a system to restore the livelihood of destitute low caste leather tanners who had lost their market due to the poor quality of their product. In this instance the tanners already possessed the necessary skills but their technology was deficient. A leather research expert visiting SWRC was pressed into service and demonstrated a better technology that made sense to the experienced tanners and they readily adopted it. But to complete the system they still needed credit to build better "pits" and to purchase appropriate chemicals. SWRC helped them to fill in these missing links and also to organize their own small cooperative, and soon the tanners were back in business. The resulting improved supply of good quality leather at reasonable prices, plus some help from SWRC on product

design and marketing, also enabled skilled traditional leather-craft workers (women) in the area to revive their local industry and to bring in desperately needed cash.

The above examples were on a small scale, but they demonstrate some basic principles that could be applied on a much wider scale.

Integration between separate programs.

This important type of integration is perhaps best illustrated by the health improvement activities that were a central element in several of the case study programs. Their combined experience offers a variety of useful lessons to those concerned with developing community-based rural primary health care systems.

One of the central lessons coming out of these projects is the importance of combining within a single integrated service the various essential health measures and services that are typically scattered among several different organizations (most of them sub-divisions of the Ministry of Health). It is little wonder that rural families are often bewildered by the many different messages and voices telling them how to stay healthy; in the course of a month they may hear (by radio if not in person) from the sanitarian, the nutritionist, the family planning worker, the cholera worker, the malaria worker, the maternal and child care specialist, and perhaps still others, all talking a different jargon and often giving conflicting advice.

Several of the case study programs--the Lampang Health Development Project in Thailand is a good case in point--sought to consolidate at least some of these basic preventive, promotive and curative services and to bring them either directly into each village or within feasible reach.

Horizontal and vertical integration.

The case studies demonstrate that both horizontal and vertical integration are essential to the effective operation of any "community-based" program. There is need, on the one hand, to tie together horizontally at the individual community level certain closely related activities impinging on basic family needs and interests. An infant and child care program, for example, must be linked to nutrition, and nutrition must be linked to the raising, preservation and preparation of family food. It must also include systematic health monitoring at the village level, protective inoculations against major diseases, and above all, the education of mothers on how to cope with such common but frequently serious ailments as diarrhoea and scabies. Experience has also shown that family planning programs are often rejected by poor and uneducated villagers unless they are horizontally integrated with other services of more immediate and compelling interest to local families--such as child health care and ways of earning some extra cash.

Vertical integration is indispensable to the successful operation of community-based programs because villagers cannot do every-

thing on their own; their efforts must be integrated with technical guidance and selective help from outside the village. The sustained motivation, credibility and effectiveness of community health workers, for example, is dependent on the timely replenishment of their medical supplies from outside sources, on supervision, assistance and training from more highly trained health personnel at higher echelons in the system, and on their being able to refer difficult cases rapidly to a clinic or hospital. The same principles apply to local workers and programs in any other important sector of rural life--they need selective assistance from the outside to augment and facilitate their own resources and efforts.

Inter-organizational integration.

This type of integration, which overlaps with the third type described above, does not come easily because it requires close operational collaboration between separate organizations accustomed to working independently. Integration in this sense should not be confused with "coordination", a term that often means in practice arriving at a mutual agreement between parallel organizations to stay off each other's turf, which is diametrically opposite to true integration of effort.

Contrary to the traditional strong desire of most voluntary organizations to remain at arm's length from government and even from each other, the voluntary organizations in ICED's sample made a concerted effort to develop cooperative relations and productive linkages with particular government agencies,

generally with useful results and without compromising their independence. The Social Work and Research Centre in India, for example, adopted a basic rule that it would never try to go-it-alone on any activity; it would always seek to join forces in a complementary way with some other voluntary organization or educational institution or government agency with similar interests. In line with this policy, its water survey and development program, run by a small and energetic staff, was financially assisted by government agencies that used the results of SWRC's surveys as a basis for sizeable government investments in irrigation and rural electrification in the area that would probably have been delayed for years in the absence of SWRC's initiative. SWRC's community health program, agricultural program and radically experimental elementary school project also had mutually beneficial linkages with both state and national agencies.

There was no evidence that SWRC had compromised its independence and freedom to take unconventional initiatives because of these close governmental ties. On the contrary, the evidence indicates that innovatively-minded government officers (and there usually are some, everywhere) actively encouraged SWRC to take on important tasks and experiments that would not have been possible for their own official agencies.

There are numerous other examples in the case studies of the integration of government and voluntary efforts, taking many different forms. The impression should not be left, however, that all these efforts at inter-

organizational integration were easy or necessarily successful. One would have thought, for example, that the SAVAR People's Health Program and the Ministry of Health in Bangladesh were natural allies; yet for a number of years the Ministry frowned on the voluntary organization's good works and declined offers to cooperate--apparently because SAVAR's unorthodox practices, such as the use of young lady paramedics to perform certain functions customarily reserved to fully trained doctors, violated the mores of the orthodox medical establishment. One of the most difficult and delicate tasks of the Lampang Health Development Project was to persuade key members of the urban-oriented, hospital-based medical profession to team up with the public health profession in an integrated attack on widespread rural health problems, embracing preventive and promotive health services along with access to curative services.

Some general observations on integration.

It may be useful at this point to sum up a few broad practical conclusions regarding integration that come from ICED's case studies and appear to have wide applicability.

First, integration is not an all-or-none affair; it is a matter of degree. It cannot suddenly spring full-blown on the local scene from the brow of an inspired distant planner or program designer, nor are there any pat formulas for achieving it. It must be a step-by-step evolutionary process, generally

starting small and then, if conditions are favorable, gradually broadening to a wider area of activities. It is also a highly pragmatic process, responding to opportunities and necessities as they arise. It is bound to progress unevenly in different geographic areas depending on a variety of variables, not least of which is the calibre, courage and ingenuity of the leaders on the scene.

Second, the main obstacle to effective integration is usually not the villagers, for to them an integrated approach generally makes better sense than a fragmented one because it fits their own unified view of their family-life. The main obstacle is usually the specialized bureaucracies and specialists whose job is to serve the villagers. The reasons are quite understandable. These organizations and specialists, by the very nature of their mandate and training, are prone to take a narrow view of development in which their own specialty (whatever it may be) is seen as the hub around which all else revolves. It is basically these narrow perceptions and the attitudes they breed--plus the natural competitiveness and pride and the often perverse system of incentives that govern the behavior of bureaucracies--that constitute the more serious deterrents to a more integrated approach.

To break out of these habits of mind the first requirement is for the various specialists and administrators to acquire a broader and more unified view of rural development, and of how their own particular piece fits into the larger whole. Only when they become intellectually convinced that their own

efforts and those of others working in the same vineyard can be mutually reinforcing, and therefore more effective if they all work in close partnership, are they likely to abandon their natural compulsion to go it alone. This intellectual and attitudinal transformation, of course, does not happen easily, and for some it probably can never happen. But the process can be greatly accelerated if the top political leaders and the heads of these organizations become overt and enthusiastic advocates of a more integrated approach, and if every staff training program provides clear guidance on how to go about it.

Third, another basic requirement for achieving better integration is a larger measure of organizational decentralization and devolution of responsibilities that gives all workers close to the scene of action wider latitude for taking initiatives, for cooperating with other services, and for working more closely with each community in designing and implementing action plans that conform to general national policies and priorities but are also tailored to fit the peculiar needs and circumstances of each area. In the case of national programs, nothing could be more helpful for a starter than for each central ministry to assure its lower echelon staff and field agents that they have a green light to take innovative initiatives and to collaborate with the agents of other ministries.

It should be cautioned, however, that decentralization, like integration, is neither an all-or-none proposition nor a panacea. It is a matter of striking a good balance

between central control and guidance and local initiative and latitude. For such a balance to work well there must be personnel at lower echelons capable of exercising responsibility and managing local activities. There must also be safeguards against decentralized programs being captured by local vested interests to their own advantage.

Integration is usually more easily achieved at the lower echelons of the hierarchy than at the top because the local representatives of different central organizations are all looking closely at the same realities in the same place and are thus more disposed to collaborate in tackling them. They are also in the best position to devise and implement practical and productive ways to integrate their efforts. But this, of course, is quite the opposite of how things normally work in hierarchical single-purpose organizations; the field agents are trained to stick closely to "the book" and to their "own business", and failure to do so may jeopardize their career.

Fourth, as a general rule progress toward better integration is easier where all or most of the relevant components are under the jurisdiction and control of the same organization. Even then, however, the various semi-autonomous subdivisions of a large organization, such as a ministry of health or agriculture, may stoutly resist any move that seems to violate their particular philosophy or threaten their independence. It takes strong and persuasive top leadership, more interested in helping the people than preserv-

ing an empire, to overcome these internal bureaucratic resistances.

Smaller voluntary organizations have the advantage of not having to cope with these divisive bureaucratic problems, and this helps give them their unique flexibility to pioneer in fresh directions and develop significant lessons that may later be adopted by larger scale government programs to extend their own effectiveness. But even voluntary organizations, as they expand and mature, are not immune to excessive centralization and to "hardening of the categories". The authors of the Sarvodaya case study in Sri Lanka felt that this dynamic and rapidly expanding organization, whose record of helping the rural poor is outstanding, might be suffering from a touch of these classic bureaucratic infirmities.

Finally, organizations in developing countries have no monopoly on resisting a more integrated approach that might jeopardize their bureaucratic autonomy. In this respect, larger external assistance agencies are a mirror image of the organizational structures in developing countries. Most of them, both bilateral and multilateral, have been finding it very painful to apply to their own organizational arrangements and practices the message of "integration" they are preaching to others. It is still rare, for example, to find the agricultural, health, or population staffs in these categorically structured organizations turning to the education staff for help on designing effective and low-cost training and learning components for inclusion in their "sectoral" projects. But to

their credit, most of these agencies have recently been making serious--if not always successful--efforts to overcome these internal bureaucratic sound barriers.

TOWARD GREATER COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The ICED case studies strongly support the proposition that extensive community involvement and self-help are indispensable to the success of any broad-gauged effort to transform a rural society and to meet the basic needs of its poorest families. One reason is because central government treasuries simply cannot marshal sufficient resources to do the job alone. But an equally important reason is because authentic rural development requires extensive changes in the rural people and communities themselves--changes of a kind that even the most authoritarian government is powerless to bring about by fiat.

The case studies also make clear, however, that creating and organizing extensive community involvement, where it does not already exist, is far more complicated than many ritual advocates of "community participation" apparently realize.

The difficulties are to be found mainly in the hierarchical social, economic and political structures of most villages; in the highly uneven distribution of productive assets, income and power; in the patterns of dependency, exploitation and rivalry among

different sub-groups; and in the lack of viable democratic local institutions. It should be added, however, that villages are by no means all alike; they differ enormously in many respects--which is one reason why standardized prefabricated program models brought in from the outside are so often out of kilter with local realities. Few if any villages, however, fit the romantic image that some people still cherish of them, as little self-reliant democratic societies brimming with brotherly love and ready to respond eagerly to any external intervention designed to help the people help themselves. In truth, many villages are actually not "communities" in the unified sense; they are frequently loose federations of rival sub-communities of various castes, kinship or other groupings, each with its own loyalties and traditions and its own stake, status and role in the local scheme of things.

Thus, as emphasized earlier, any intervention from the outside, however well intentioned, is likely to misfire if it does not take sensitive account of the socioeconomic divisions, attitudes, cultural traditions and internal human relations, politics and economics of the particular community, and of the differing circumstances and needs of various subgroups within the community, as <u>they</u> see their needs.

The mistaken assumption that underlies many top-down programs is that villagers, because they are illiterate, are unintelligent and must be treated like children. Hence the "messages" devised by experts at higher echelons often talk down to the rural people,

telling them what is "good" for them (without really explaining why) and urging them to abandon various traditional practices in favor of innovative ones the experts consider better. But in reality most rural people, far from being naive or stupid, have acquired considerable wisdom through years of struggling for survival. They may cling to certain ill-founded myths and taboos that do them more harm than good, but they also have a great fund of local knowledge that exceeds that of the outsider and a very practical sense of what is and is not feasible. Their cautiousness about accepting advice from "outsiders" is usually well founded; they have been burned too often before. They may listen politely to them but are unlikely to heed their advice--for example, to alter their diet or to adopt modern family planning methods or some agricultural innovation--until and unless they are convinced in their own mind and by their own logic that it is in their best interest to do so. They are far more likely to accept the advice of a respected neighbor whom they consider the local "expert" on a particular matter than to follow the advice of outside specialists. Thus, much of the impetus for change must come from within the community. The problem is how to spark this impetus and then how to get the community effectively organized for self-help, self-direction and broad-scale change.

Another common error is to overestimate the potentialities of a single project--particularly one of those standard projects whose outside support disappears after three to five years--to bring about fundamental and

permanent changes in a rural area. A well conceived "project" may well improve conditions in a village, but it would be naive to suppose that it can transform that village's deeply-rooted traditions, values and human relationships all by itself. Only powerful and fundamental nationwide social, economic and political changes can do this.

Different forms of participation.

Standing alone, "community participation" is just as ambiguous a term as "integration". It acquires concrete meaning only when viewed in a specific context. There are numerous types and degrees of community participation, ranging across a wide spectrum. At the one extreme, villagers may participate negatively by actively resisting the overtures of strangers from the city whose offers of help they instinctively mistrust. Or they may participate passively in a purely top-down program by listening politely to its "messages" and accepting any hand-outs, but without altering their customary views and behavior. Standing at the other extreme is the village that has organized itself democratically to examine its own needs, priorities and options, to make decisions and plans, to mobilize its own resources, and to seek specific kinds of help from outside sources to fill gaps and break bottlenecks beyond its own capacity. Most villages seem to fall between these extremes.

Listed below are a number of different types and forms of community participation illustrated by ICED's case studies.

- Local "specialists" in a community-based program who render particular services to their neighbors, with backstopping from specialists and institutions outside the village. Examples include the local health and family planning workers and indigenous midwives in several of the case study programs. It is generally a sure sign of serious community commitment and involvement wherever one finds such local "specialists" and volunteers with limited training seriously carrying out important grass-roots operational responsibilities in a vertically integrated program, especially if there is also a representative local committee that selects the local workers and supports and oversees their activities.

- Local contributions of money or labor and materials to help defray the costs of a service or project. Examples found in the ICED case studies include health insurance schemes and family health fees, local contributions of labor in bridge-building and other construction projects, and contributions of food for local day care centers. These types of contributions, involving sacrifices of personal goods and time, are also usually a sign of serious local commitment to the idea of self-help and self-reliance.

- The creation or strengthening of self-run local institutions and mechanisms to carry out important functions beneficial to particular needy sub-groups. Examples of this type from the case studies include cooperatives for fishermen, for

women handicraft workers, and for leather tanners; mothers' clubs; youth groups; and local organizations of small farmers.

- The creation of broader community-wide mechanisms for selecting priorities and for planning and implementing local development projects, including the identification of specific kinds of assistance required from outside sources to supplement local inputs. The most striking example of this among the ICED cases is the local planning and implementation system established in the C-BIRD project areas in South Korea. Each project area encompasses several neighboring villages, each of which elects members of an overall council who in turn elect a smaller executive group headed by a chairman (who spends a high proportion of his time as general manager of the planned development schemes). Another example is the Village Reawakening Council in the Sarvodaya Movement in Sri Lanka, which considers community-wide problems and serves as an umbrella for other local organizations involving particular subgroups such as children, youths, mothers, farmers and elderly people.

- The formation of local pressure groups to bring about structural changes and reforms, to achieve a more equitable sharing of the benefits of development, to demand better services from government agencies, or to exercise a larger voice in policy and program decisions affecting their lives. Such examples are relatively exceptional, in part because the

poorest and most vulnerable rural people are generally hesitant to organize themselves for political action. But it appears to be happening increasingly as disadvantaged people become aware of the causes of their poverty and of their own innate power to do something about it, and as the notion spreads that distributive justice and not simply a higher GNP is a major objective of development.

The above list by no means exhausts the possible forms that community participation can take, but it suggests some of the important clues to look for in assessing and improving any existing rural development program and some important possibilities to consider in designing new ones.

Getting the process started.

All villages, even the poorest, have considerable potential for helping themselves and improving the condition of their members, but to realize this potential they may require initial stimulation and substantial assistance from the outside--not just any kind of assistance but the right kind at the right time, rendered in a way that will strengthen rather than inhibit their spirit of self-reliance and self-determination.

A village that is already in motion, that is internally organized and reasonably unified and that has confidence in its ability to improve itself based on previous accomplishments, is far easier to assist toward further accomplishments than one that is static, unorganized and divided. One detects signifi-

cant differences in this respect, for example, between many villages in Indonesia, with their long tradition of internal cooperation (gotong royong) and many in Bangladesh that seem almost devoid of community institutions or traditions around which local self-help efforts might be organized. The latter type situation, which unfortunately is still very common, presents the most difficult and delicate challenge to well-intentioned outsiders.

The experience of several of the case study programs makes it clear that the most important and often most difficult task for outsiders approaching a rural community for the first time is to win their trust and acceptance by convincing all segments of the community that the outsiders genuinely have the community's own interests at heart and are not there as exploiters; that they are willing and able to provide certain types of needed help over a sustained period; and that the community itself will have a major voice in deciding what activities will be undertaken and in carrying them out.

This introductory phase can often be very time consuming, and very frustrating for the outsider who thinks he already has the answers and is anxious to get on with the action--if only to prove to his own headquarters or funding source that he is getting "concrete results". It is important for all concerned, especially outside funding agencies, to realize that short-circuiting this initial process or hurrying it unduly can be self-defeating. Desirably, this first phase requires sparking a process of self-examination by all groups in the community, designed to elicit their

candid views on their priority needs, problems and the roots of these problems, and on possible alternative ways to tackle them with their own efforts, supplemented by selective outside help. Voguish "baseline surveys" and standardized household interviews are no substitute for this kind of community-wide introspection and dialogue.

In the course of this exploratory phase the outsiders will have an opportunity to size up the local situation--the economic conditions and potentialities, the social patterns, power structure and kinds of leadership, the various sub-groups and divisions within the population, and the general climate of attitudes and opinions. These insights into the "chemistry" of the community can provide invaluable guidance on what kinds of initial actions to undertake, how to go about them, and what to avoid.

Various "coping techniques".

Obviously there can be no fixed formula for all situations, but the experiences of the programs examined in the case studies suggest a number of "coping techniques" worth considering.

- Making positive use of traditional local values and forms of cooperation, and building wherever possible on existing local institutions of various kinds. Sarvodaya, for example, embraced the traditional Buddhist values of charitable works to help the less fortunate and the Gandhian values of community self-help.

- Starting off with one or more activities that are directly addressed to locally expressed priority needs, that can show relatively quick and visible results, and that are clearly beneficial to the elite as well as to other segments of the community in order to win support of the "powers that be", or at least to forestall their immediate opposition. (The initial water development activities of SWRC were criticized by some for benefitting mainly the larger farmers, but they undoubtedly helped to avert their opposition to later projects designed specifically to benefit the poorest community members. SWRC's health program, which benefitted all members of the community, was also helpful in this respect.)

- Working with different sub-groups having similar needs and interests, rather than directing all projects at the community as a whole, so as to encourage freer participation in small peer group settings and to adapt the activities to the special circumstances of each group.

- Initiating as soon as feasible viable income-generating projects tailored to the needs of particularly disadvantaged sub-groups and helping them develop the required institutional base for effective self-management.

- Using educational processes to increase people's awareness of their inherent capacity to effect change and improvement in their own condition, even starting from bare subsistence levels.

- Finding ways to mobilize and upgrade existing special talents in the community--such as local religious leaders, teachers, traditional birth attendants and other health practitioners, organizational leaders, progressive farmers, and so forth.

- Seeking ways to broaden the leadership base of the community by developing leaders for new types of organized activities and especially by encouraging the development of youth leaders and women leaders and organizations for rendering constructive services to the community.

- Encouraging traditional cultural and recreational activities--such as festivals, fairs, exhibitions and contests--that subordinate class distinctions and invite community-wide participation.

- Setting good personal examples by involving able and respected urban participants in the program, but under village austerity conditions, to demonstrate the value attached to serving the cause of the rural poor.

- Developing local competencies to plan and manage projects on a village-wide or multi-village basis.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRONT-LINE WORKERS

A switchover by any government to a more integrated, community-based approach to rural development--for example in the health area--will inevitably require the recruitment, training and effective backstopping of large numbers of front-line workers. These include particularly: (1) resident village workers, often volunteers, who serve as the main link between their neighbors and vertical delivery systems and (2) para-professionals who are full time employees, based within close range of a set of villages, who function as the main supervisors and supporters of village workers and as their liaison with the rest of the delivery system. The basic role of all other professionals and administrators at higher echelons of a community-based system should be to stimulate, guide, and support these front-line workers, not to "boss" them. In other words, they should play primarily a facilitating role in contrast to their predominantly directive role under a typical top-down system.

Several of the case studies demonstrate vividly that the ultimate efficiency and effectiveness of any community-based system depend heavily on the functions and responsibilities entrusted to these grassroots workers and how well they carry them out. This in turn depends on how well the front-line workers are selected, trained and supported, and what incentives and motivations they have for doing their best.

As a general rule, the more serious the responsibilities given them, the more seriously they and the community are likely to take their work. By the same token, however, the more essential it is that they be given strong and continuous support and supervision from the outside in order to sustain their competence, morale, credibility and effectiveness in the community. A community-based health or family planning program, for example, that is not adequately tied in with and supported by higher levels of the system could be worse than no locally-based program at all. It would be a deceptive sham, perhaps good for national and international public relations but quite unfair to the rural people.

A number of practical questions arise with respect to these front-line workers. What functions and responsibilities should they be given and not given? Should they be single or multi-purpose workers, and if the latter, how much can they handle without becoming overloaded? What qualities and qualifications should they have? How should they be recruited, selected and trained? What should be done about personnel turnover? What incentives do they need to take their responsibilities seriously, to stay with the job, and to put forth their best efforts? What sort of supervision and continuing support and follow-up training do they require?

The case studies shed considerable light on these and similar questions, at the same time demonstrating, however, that there are no pat answers to fit all situations. They also support the following widely applicable propositions.

First, village workers and paraprofessionals can effectively carry out more important responsibilities than many highly trained professionals, particularly in the medical field, are willing to concede--provided (and this is a crucially important proviso) they are properly selected and trained and are given steady and adequate supervision and support by more highly trained personnel. The impressive performance of the paramedics in the SAVAR project (Bangladesh) and the Lampang Project (Thailand) and of SWRC's village health workers and indigenous midwives (India), are good examples of what is possible. The less impressive performance of the local "health post volunteers" and "health communicators" in the Lampang Project, on the other hand, offers a stern warning of what happens when too little attention is given to training and backstopping local workers.

Even with good backstopping from the outside, however, care must be taken not to impose too many different functions and responsibilities on individual local workers, lest they end up doing none of them adequately. The problem is one of striking a balance between giving them too little and too much to handle. There is no universally valid formula; the best solution must be found to fit each set of circumstances. As a general rule, however, it is usually better to confine a local worker to a few closely connected activities--relating say, to the care and feeding of young children plus family planning--than to give them more diversified assignments cutting across such different sectors as health, agriculture, skill training and rural industry.

Second, selection of the right types of candidates at the outset is fundamental. It is generally helpful if the local community plays a significant role in selecting them. Village workers should desirably possess the right values and motivations, a strong sense of community service, good intelligence, and the ability to take initiatives, accept responsibility and follow instructions. For some functions they should also be sufficiently literate to be able, for example, to read a health or agricultural manual and to keep simple records; but to insist on some minimum number of years of formal schooling, such as a secondary school certificate, may be self-defeating. No amount or type of formal training can, by itself, create the above qualities; but good training can enhance and channel them where they already exist.

Third, "good training" constitutes much more than a one-shot, pre-packaged intensive "training course" extending over a few days or weeks. The basic competencies, skills, attitudes and insights that are needed by front-line workers can only be acquired through practical experience on the job, in close association with more experienced people and under their guidance and supervision. The apprenticeship approach used by SAVAR, BRAC, and SWRC, not simply to "train" but to "develop" their local workers and para-professionals, placed a sizeable burden on more highly trained staff but paid large dividends. Structured and highly compact training courses such as those relied on by the Lampang Project for training "health post volunteers" and "health communicators" can be useful if they are well designed and well carried out, but they must be followed up with frequent field contacts

and informal on-the-job training (which was missing at Lampang). The common tendency of program designers and managers to put their full faith in one-shot pre-service training courses and to neglect the need for subsequent training experiences invariably leads to disappointing results.

Finally, it is also important that more highly trained personnel in the system treat local workers not simply as common errand boys but as professional colleagues. Only in this way can they gain the self-respect, personal satisfaction and community appreciation so essential to growing on the job and "keeping up the good work".

EDUCATING VILLAGERS FOR CHANGE

If the training of front-line "operators" often tends to be neglected by program designers and managers, the education of the "users" is neglected even more. During the 1970s, for example, the World Bank gave increasing attention (though often not enough) to including "training components" in their projects for those involved in operating them, but no comparable attention was given to educating the intended "users" on how to take full advantage of the new services.

The basic point is that rural people themselves must be the real change agents and that to play this role they require education of many sorts, not only to give them new technical information and skills but new insights into their own lives and surroundings leading to changes in their outlook and behavior. To

meet these essential learning needs requires a broad and flexible view of education, one that extends far beyond schooling or formal training courses and equates education with learning, taking many different forms.

Professional educators (especially adult educators well versed in the techniques of non-formal education) as well as information and communication specialists have important contributions to make in this area. But they cannot do the job alone, and they will fail if they try to. Virtually everybody involved in the operation, but especially the village workers and paraprofessionals who are closest to the villagers, have important educational roles to play.

The very process of development is itself an important educational experience. The health worker doing his or her rounds, the midwife conferring with pregnant women, the paraprofessional visiting a village, are not simply technicians but teachers. A preventive and promotional health program is 90 percent an educational effort--an effort to give people not only "information" but a better understanding of the causes of their health problems, of what they can do to correct them, and of how and why they must change their own practices in order to improve the health status of their children. Such understanding is better achieved through demonstrations and practical actions--such as a baby "weighing program"--than through abstract lectures or hortatory slogans. Such understanding, in personal terms, is similarly essential to the success of family planning programs. Access to contraceptives is not enough (notwithstand-

ing the contrary claims of some advocates); the potential users will only use the contraceptives if they come to see clearly for themselves that it is in their own best interest to do so. And sometimes it is not.

In short, rural people are not sheep who can be led blindly. They generally do not respond well to preaching and propaganda that fail to give them convincing reasons and new insights into why they should change their customary behavior and practices. This is the fundamental difference between an educational strategy and a simplistic propaganda strategy that underestimates the intelligence and psychology of rural people.

Unfortunately, the bureaucratic world of specialization is generally ill-equipped to infuse appropriate learning (educational) elements into various development activities. Educators are expected to do all the educating and other specialists are expected to stick to their own tasks. But all too often education specialists design "education" components for rural development programs in the image of formal schooling and operate them in isolation rather than making them an integral part of other development activities. The education specialists tend to preoccupy themselves with literacy, "social education", "home economics" and similar conventional "education" classes, leaving other types of specialists--for example, in agriculture, health, family planning and sanitation--to improvise the essential training and learning components for their own particular programs (though they usually do not think of this as "education"). Sometimes they find good

solutions, but sometimes not. It is not unusual for specialists in agricultural production, medicine and other fields, to regard education as something to keep the educators busy but as quite peripheral and unimportant to the achievement of their objectives.

Communications specialists, who are knowledgeable about important educational tools, endeavor to provide "communications support" for various sectoral programs, sometimes to very useful effect. However, they too usually think of themselves as a separate professional breed from the educators, and many are narrowly wedded to one or another particular medium or technology rather than being multi-media and multi-method generalists. Thus they tilt strongly toward using radio or TV, or film strips or some other favorite audio-visual aid to the neglect of traditional local media, such as folk singers and entertainers that are lower cost, more adaptable to local conditions and more convincing to local people. Some of them also lean heavily toward advertising and propaganda techniques rather than authentic educational efforts.

Although most of the case study programs started off with these stereotype views of education, they gradually moved toward a more flexible, functional and integrated view of education (including training) with correspondingly better results. Their experience leaves unanswered, however, an important question that will face all rural development programs increasingly: where does one turn for help and competent personnel to insure that appropriate and affordable learning

components get built into family improvement and other rural development services? Most educational research institutes, teacher training colleges and ministries of education are hardly the place, because their interest, knowledge and methods are too tightly tied to formal education, which is a quite different affair. Adult education institutes come closer, but even they are often too much the prisoners of formal education thinking and practices, and of a narrow "literacy tradition". There is an important vacuum here that needs filling.

NEW ROLES FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANIZATIONS

Voluntary organizations--both religious and secular--have long been active in many developing countries in providing social services to the rural needy. Generally they operated on a modest scale in a limited geographical area and kept their distance from government agencies and other voluntary organizations. Although they frequently benefitted the population in a limited area, only rarely did their influence spread to other areas or programs, least of all to governmental programs. Moreover, because they usually confined their efforts to purely social services and relief activities without attempting to strike at the economic roots of social problems, their efforts generally failed to create a self-sustaining process of development managed by the people themselves.

In recent years, however, important changes have been occurring. A growing number of

voluntary organizations have begun to shift their emphasis from relief and limited social services to more fundamental development efforts. Many of those with religious affiliations have abandoned their earlier emphasis on proselytizing and are stressing instead practical social and economic actions designed to lift people out of poverty. Also a new brand of indigenous secular voluntary organizations has begun to appear that is strongly committed to integrated, community-based, long term development and to cooperating with government agencies and other private organizations in order to enhance their mutual effectiveness.

The voluntary organizations examined in ICED's case studies fall largely into this new category. Their collective experiences demonstrate the following specific ways, among others, by which voluntary organizations can effectively augment government efforts by doing things that are more difficult, if not impossible, for government agencies to do themselves:

- By helping rural communities to organize themselves to plan their own development projects and programs and to identify specific kinds of help they need from the government and other "outsiders" for carrying out these local plans.

- By conducting local studies (e.g., of water development and agricultural potentials) that can pave the way for broader investment and actions by appropriate government agencies.

- By using their special training facilities and techniques and their capacity for creating effective training materials to assist in training government staff for rural work.

- By undertaking relatively radical experiments (for example, in rural elementary education, or in using local health and family planning auxiliaries, or in settling landless families on new land) that can provide useful lessons and guidance for larger scale government programs.

- By developing community-based mechanisms that can help to coordinate and integrate the development contribution of various available government services to the community.

- By conducting experiments and research whose results can be applied by government agencies and private organizations in other parts of the country.

With the increased interest today in rural development and helping the rural poor, a number of governments--India is an example--are turning more seriously to voluntary agencies for help. The voluntary agencies in turn are working more closely together toward common objectives. Among the case study programs, BRAC (Bangladesh) is providing staff training services and materials for other voluntary groups; the Gram Bal Shiksha Kendra (GBSK) at Kosbad Hill (India) is training preschool teachers for other organizations; the IPPA's Youth Project on population education

(Indonesia) involved an integrated effort with voluntary youth organizations; and other examples could be cited.

International voluntary organizations such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation, OXFAM, Save the Children Federation, the Boy and Girl Scouts, YMCA, the 4-H Club Foundation, and various church groups, have long given encouragement and support to local affiliates and indigenous voluntary groups in developing countries. Their collective efforts appear to have been growing in recent years, with increased emphasis on basic rural development and community action. Without such private external help, many indigenous voluntary groups in developing countries would find it difficult to survive. This applies to most of those covered by ICED's case studies, though it is noteworthy that virtually all of them are endeavoring, with some success, to reduce their dependency on foreign sources of finance.

Ironically, most of the official aid agencies--especially the multilateral ones--that have been vigorously promoting the goals and strategies of the new international consensus on rural development have done little to assist indigenous voluntary organizations, which are uniquely suited to help along these lines. There are notable exceptions, however; a number of bilateral aid agencies in Western Europe and North America have channeled substantial funds to voluntary groups in developing countries, mostly through their own national voluntary organizations.

This is not to suggest, of course, that voluntary agencies should take over the responsibilities of government (which clearly they cannot). Or conversely, that governments should dominate the voluntary agencies (which could quickly destroy their independence and unique flexibility and utility). Nor is it to suggest that governments can replicate on a large scale various innovative program models developed by voluntary organizations, for this in most instances would be patently impossible because of the very nature of large government organizations. Nevertheless, as the case studies clearly demonstrate, there are abundant possibilities for well-conceived and well-managed voluntary programs to cooperate with and supplement governmental rural development efforts in a variety of significant ways, even if on a modest scale.

SOME PRACTICAL NEXT STEPS

It is clear from the evidence presented in these pages that the effective pursuit of the new goals and strategies of rural development will require far-reaching changes in existing organizational structures, procedures, attitudes and operating styles. To put it more bluntly, if development agencies--both domestic and international--are to be effective in encouraging integration and community development they must first put their own house in order. First, they must shift their traditional emphasis from the separate sector-by-sector approach to a broader and more integrated problem approach that fits the realities of specific rural situations. Second, they must abandon the excessively

standardized, mechanistic and rigid approach to designing and appraising new rural projects in favor of one that places more emphasis on sizing up each rural area in its own terms and only then designing a project carefully tailored to these local needs and circumstances. They must also provide wide latitude and flexibility for rural projects to evolve as circumstances change rather than being glued to a fixed predetermined "plan". Third, in order to capitalize more fully on the important lessons of their own past experience they will need to adopt a broader approach to evaluation. Finally, there is much still to be gained through closer cooperation between various operating agencies, both governmental (and intergovernmental) and voluntary organizations.

These basic requirements are already widely recognized in principle and in recent years more and more organizations have taken further steps in these directions. But there is a long way still to go.

At the urging of several experienced members of such organizations, we include in this final section a number of specific suggestions of "next steps" that may be useful.

1. Breaking Bureaucratic Sound Barriers

The necessary changes in the behavior of development organizations obviously cannot be achieved simply by changing the boxes and labels on the organization chart. Much more important is to broaden the thinking, perceptions, attitudes and working styles of the

administrators and specialists occupying these boxes. This can best be achieved by getting them into more frequent and closer dialogue and collaboration with each other--in short, by breaking the long-standing bureaucratic sound barriers, both within complex agencies that include a variety of sectoral bureaus and between specialized agencies that concentrate on a particular sector.

A number of agencies are already trying to do this through one or more of the following ways:

- Creation of a strong Rural Development Working Group of experienced, able and analytically minded staff members from different sectors and disciplines who are given a top-level mandate: (a) to identify and examine crucial operational requirements, obstacles and opportunities for implementing the agency's or the government's rural development objectives and priorities; (b) to assess realistically the agency's special strengths and its inherent limitations for promoting these objectives; (c) to recommend to top management specific arrangements--such as intersectoral task forces--that would enable different agencies, or different units of the same agency, to bring their respective strengths to bear most effectively on a particular set of needs; and (d) to develop practical guidelines for preparing, implementing and evaluating specific rural development projects that can be useful to all sectors.

- Assignment of several broad-gauged and adaptable specialists to work within neighboring sectors; for example, a nutritionist to work with agriculture, an agriculturalist to work with the rural health or family planning group; and some unconventional educators to assist various sectors with the training and educational components of their projects.

- Organization of a series of intersectoral staff seminars to discuss the findings of critical case studies of actual projects and major issues posed by them.

- A concerted effort to develop and recruit more "generalists" who can play catalytic roles in bringing together the strengths and contributions of different specialties and disciplines.

- A similar effort to recruit into each sectoral bureau a few operationally-minded rural sociologists, cultural anthropologists and political scientists who can add important dimensions to sizing up rural situations and evaluating rural projects.

- Modification of existing bureaucratic incentives and disincentives with a view to rewarding rather than discouraging intersectoral collaboration and the rendering of useful technical assistance by one sectoral group to another.

2. Designing Rural Projects to Fit the Realities

Each agency has its own particular methodology and procedure for identifying, designing and appraising new projects. All of them, however, have tended to grow more sophisticated over the years, but also more standardized, inflexible, and narrowly focused on the factors of prime interest to the particular specialty concerned, thus overlooking other important factors that can make the difference between success and failure.

One of the clearest lessons to emerge from ICED's case studies is that the impact and continuity of any rural development project are strongly influenced by deep-rooted social, cultural and political factors in the project's environment, and these differ considerably from one locality to another. Failure to give adequate attention to such factors before designing the project has often led to disappointing results.

A second important lesson is that a new project or service introduced into a village or larger rural area has a far greater chance of having a substantial impact and of surviving long after the project is "completed" if it is linked to well accepted existing local organizations and if a serious effort is made to mobilize and involve local resources and local personnel with special leadership and technical abilities. Most projects, particularly those sponsored by external assistance agencies, have been seriously deficient on this score.

A third lesson is that rural development projects--especially those aimed at encouraging strong community involvement--are seriously handicapped if they are imprisoned by a preconceived fixed "project plan" and time schedule that allows little flexibility for adapting to unforeseen obstacles and opportunities that inevitably arise. The evidence indicates that the classical "project approach", however suitable it may be for an engineering project such as a power dam or road system, is not appropriate and may even be counter-productive when applied to a community-based development effort involving important changes in the behavior of human beings and communities.

It is not without significance that several of the most impressive voluntary rural programs examined by ICED did not start out with the sort of "project plan" required to pass muster with most of the external assistance agencies. They all began with a definite philosophy and strong commitment and with a general idea of the objectives they intended to pursue, but they had neither the means nor the time--nor really the need--to fashion a detailed plan and time schedule and to cost out in advance all the different resource inputs they might need. They started on a shoestring budget, hoping their initial performance would be sufficiently persuasive to attract more support. Had they waited to develop an acceptable "project proposal" to an outside bilateral or multilateral agency they might never have gotten started. More important, if they had been saddled with an "approved" three-year or five-year "plan" tied to an external grant, they would certainly not

have been able to seize some of the unexpected targets of opportunity that arose along the way and that resulted in some of their best accomplishments.

External assistance agencies should ask themselves how they might modify their standardized "project" procedures and ground-rules in order to be able to assist such promising indigenous initiatives.

3. A Broader Approach to Evaluation

One often hears the complaint that "Our development agency has no memory. We frequently start from scratch as if nothing had ever happened before. We are under such pressure to produce new projects that we have no time to go back and learn important lessons from the old ones."

This is a valid and important criticism; most agencies literally throw away many of the valuable and costly lessons of their own experience and that of others that could improve their future operations and keep them from repeating old errors. When they do evaluate a project it usually takes the form of a management-type post audit to determine whether the project kept to its original work plan and schedule, stayed within its budget, and achieved its initial objectives. Only rarely is it a penetrating case study type of evaluation aimed at discovering not only what overall success and impact the particular project had but what the main factors were that either facilitated or handicapped its

performance. Such knowledge and insights drawn from a variety of projects and programs can be especially useful at this time when many agencies are venturing into broader and more complex types of rural development projects. The cost in money and manpower of such evaluative case studies (provided they avoid excessively elaborate social science techniques and surveys) is minor compared to the investment already made in the projects, and their future benefits are likely to far outweigh the cost. Not every past project needs to be evaluated; the effort should be concentrated on a relatively limited number that hold the greatest promise of yielding valuable lessons for the future.

4. Greater Cooperation Among Agencies

It would be hard to find any development agency, domestic or external, that does not recognize the importance of greater cooperation with sister agencies--for example in exchanging information, plans and research and evaluation studies, in lending personnel occasionally, in discussing common problems, and sometimes even working together in the same project area. In recent years there have been an increasing number of good examples of such cooperation. Most would agree, however, that there is still abundant room for expanding such fruitful cooperation, even among different bureaus of the same organization.

One deterrent, of course, is the natural propensity for organizations to keep their own counsel and protect their own turf. But a

much greater deterrent is that everyone is so busy doing his own thing from day to day that, even with the best of intentions, meaningful cooperation with others gets a low priority.

The point to be emphasized here is that when different organizations get involved in integrated, community-based rural development efforts, close inter-organizational collaboration right down to the grass-roots level becomes absolutely mandatory if their efforts are to pay off. This applies not only to official agencies but to voluntary organizations as well, and to cooperation between the two.

Such cooperation can take many different forms depending on the circumstances--ranging, for example, from a shared preliminary diagnosis of a given rural area and joint consultation with local people, the joint planning of priority activities suggested by such diagnosis and consultation, the exchange of pertinent information and research, and sharing certain common services, equipment and personnel, to joint evaluation activities.

Voluntary organizations that have been operating in a particular rural area for some time can often be helpful to government agencies and external assistance agencies, for example by giving them a clearer picture of local needs and conditions and suggesting specific ways by which they might help to improve the situation and the effectiveness of their own operation. Government agencies in turn can encourage and assist voluntary organizations to try out innovative approaches or to undertake complementary local efforts

that are beyond their own agency's capabilities.

The first requirement for achieving such cooperation, however, is for different organizations with common interests to get to know each other better, including each other's special strengths and capabilities, and to develop a genuine sense of mutual trust and partnership. This is not always easy, but as several of the ICED case studies demonstrate, it can happen and when it does the dividends can be substantial.

EPILOGUE

We have tried in this booklet to point out the complexities of implementing the important goals and strategies of the new international consensus on rural development, as revealed by ICED's field investigations, and to suggest some possible ways for dealing with these complexities. In so doing we have tried to make a plea for realism, which is quite different than a counsel of despair. We have steered a middle course between the pessimists who say that the whole idea of meeting the needs of the rural poor is impossible of attainment, and the optimists who are prone to set targets (especially for the year 2000) that clearly are impossible.

To avoid misunderstanding we would emphasize that the family improvement measures on which the ICED study focused--such as health, nutrition, family planning, and so forth--do not in themselves comprise a total rural development strategy. These essentials must

be part of a broader strategy that also includes strong measures for accelerating rural economic growth (both agricultural and non-agricultural) aimed at achieving increased productivity and income and a more equitable distribution of the benefits.

All this will require major structural changes--economic, social and political--in rural societies, for so long as the rural poor are economically impotent and politically voiceless they can hardly be expected to be self-assertive and self-reliant and to help themselves toward a better life.

To progress toward these goals with all deliberate speed will require, as we have emphasized, far-reaching changes in all of the organizations that share responsibility for improving the condition of rural people and communities.

It will also require a large increase in the flow of resources and technical assistance to rural areas, including a much enlarged flow from richer to poorer countries.

Undoubtedly the most fundamental requirement, however, for building a strong momentum in these new directions is strong and enlightened political leadership at all levels, genuinely dedicated to these humanitarian goals, and a unified sense of direction and urgency on the part of the general public, including the general public in the industrialized nations. For it must be better understood in the richest nations as well as the poorest that without a more equitable sharing

of the world's goods--both within nations and between them--the security, stability and progress of all nations is in jeopardy in this highly volatile and interdependent world.

THE AUTHOR

Philip H. Coombs, economist and educator, has been Vice-Chairman and Director of Strategy Studies of the International Council for Educational Development (ICED) since its creation in 1970. Previously he served for five years as the founding director of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning in Paris and prior to that as Assistant Secretary of State for International Educational and Cultural Affairs under President John F. Kennedy. During the 1950s he worked with the Ford Foundation as director of the education program and as Secretary and Research Director of the Fund for the Advancement of Education.

Following graduate study at the University of Chicago and the Brookings Institution, Mr. Coombs taught economics at Amherst College and Williams College in Massachusetts. He has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard and Yale and in numerous developing countries, and a consultant to a variety of individual countries and international agencies. Among his best known writings are The World Educational Crisis: A Systems Analysis (Oxford University Press, 1968) and more recent books on nonformal education and rural development (see list on inside cover).

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